

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-07 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 SAJ-01 OMB-01 AID-05 EB-08 ACDA-07 /097 W
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R 241145Z JAN 77
FM AMEMBASSY DACCA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3339
INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
USLO PEKING

S E C R E T DACCA 0400

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, PINT, BG, CH, UR
SUBJECT: GENERAL ZIA'S VIEWS ON HIS CHINA TRIP AND RELATIONS
WITH THE USSR

1. CHIEF MARTIAL LAW ADMINISTRATOR MAJOR GENERAL ZIA AND I AGREED AT A RECENT SOCIAL EVENT THAT WE SHOULD MEET SOON TO TALK OVER MATTERS OF MUTUAL INTEREST. HE FOLLOWED THROUGH BY INVITING ME TO CALL AT HIS RESIDENCE IN THE CANTONMENT ON SUNDAY AFTERNOON, JANUARY 23, WHERE THE TWO OF US HAD A RELAXED HOUR AND A QUARTER DISCUSSING HIS TRIP TO CHINA, FAMILY PLANNING PROGRAMS WITHIN BANGLADESH, US-BANGLADESH ECONOMIC RELATIONS AND OTHER MATTERS. THIS MESSAGE REPORTS HIS VIEWS ON CHINA AND THE SOVIET UNION; SEPARATE TELEGRAMS COVER OTHER SUBJECTS.

2. ASKED ABOUT HIS RECENT TRIP TO CHINA, ZIA SAID HE HAD BEEN GREATLY IMPRESSED BY THE CALIBER OF THE CHINESE LEADERSHIP. THEY WERE "FORTHRIGHT" AND CONFIDENT AND SEEMED TO HAVE HANDLED THE PROBLEM
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OF THE "TERRIBLE FOUR" SUCCESSFULLY. MANY OF THEIR METHODS WOULD NOT WORK IN BANGLADESH, AND HE HAD NO INTENTION OF IMITATING THEIR EXAMPLE. NONETHELESS, WHAT THEY HAD ACHIEVED WAS IMPRESSIVE.

3. ZIA SAID HE WAS ALSO STRUCK BY THE FACT THAT THE PEOPLE IN AREAS HE VISITED SEEMED FAIRLY RELAXED

AND NOT AS REGIMENTED AS HE HAD ASSUMED. THEY AND THE PRC LEADERS SEEMED TO WANT TO COME OUT OF THEIR SHELLS. THEY VERY MUCH WANTED THE BENEFIT OF WESTERN TECHNOLOGY, AND ZIA SAID HE PERSONALLY BELIEVED THERE WERE CONSIDERABLE POSSIBILITIES FOR FURTHER COOPERATION WITH THE U.S. AND THE WEST IN GENERAL.

4. REGARDING THE INDIAN OCEAN, ZIA SAID HE HAD THE "CLEAR IMPRESSION" THAT THE PRC HAD GOOD REASON TO WANT THE U.S. TO MAINTAIN A STRONG POSITION THERE. THE CHINESE ALSO TOLD HIM THAT THEY HOPED THE U.S. WOULD BOLSTER ITS POSITION IN NATO AND WESTERN EUROPE, OBVIOUSLY TO DIVERT SOVIET RESOURCES FROM THEIR EASTERN FRONTIERS.

5. ZIA SAID THE CHINESE TOLD HIM THEY WANTED TO "NORMALIZE" RELATIONS WITH INDIA BUT SAID THEY DID NOT BELIEVE THE INDIANS, FOR THEIR PART, WERE SINCERE IN WANTING TO IMPROVE RELATIONS. THE SOVIETS WERE TOO STRONG IN INDIA. PRC LEADERS SAID THERE HAD BEEN SOME IMPROVEMENT IN SINO-INDIAN RELATIONS, BUT THEY DID NOT GIVE THE IMPRESSION THEY BELIEVED THIS WAS EITHER PERMANENT OR VERY DAMP. THE CHINESE DID, HOWEVER, TALK ABOUT WHAT THEY REGARDED AS REAL IMPROVEMENTS IN THEIR RELATIONS WITH IRAN AND AFGHANISTAN.

6. ON SPECIFICS, HE CONFIRMED AS WE HAVE LEARNED
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FROM OTHER SOURCES THAT THE PRC PROMISED ECONOMIC AID IN CONSTRUCTION OF A MEDIUM-SIZED FERTILIZER PLANT, THE TEXTILE INDUSTRY AND DEVELOPMENT OF WATER RESOURCES. ON THE MILITARY SIDE, THEY WOULD HELP INCREASE PRODUCTION AT THE JOYDEVPUR ARSENAL AND PROVIDE SOME LIMITED EQUIPMENT AND TRAINING. HOWEVER, ZIA SAID MUCH MORE IS REQUIRED TO GIVE THE BANGLADESH ARMED FORCES EVEN THE MINIMAL CAPACITY TO RESERVE INTERNAL SECURITY. WHILE PLAYING DOWN THE SPECIFIC ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE TRIP, ZIA IS NONETHELESS OBVIOUSLY PLEASED. OUR DISCUSSION INDICATES THAT HE SEES CHINA NOT ONLY AS A ADDITIONAL SOURCE OF FINANCIAL AID, BUT MORE IMPORTANTLY (SINCE BANGLADESH CAN'T USE THE ECONOMIC AID ALREADY AVAILABLE) AS A RESOURCE OF SUPPORT, PARTICULARLY IN BANGLADESH'S PROBLEMS WITH INDIA.

7. ON RELATIONS WITH THE SOVIET UNION, ZIA SAID HE DIDNOT BELIEVE MUCH WOULD COME OUT OF THE RECENT VISIT BY SOVIET DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER FIRYUBIN. THE

SOVIET VISITOR COMPLAINED THAT BANGLADESH AND THE USSR HAD "DRIFTED APART" SINCE AUGUST 1975 BUT ACCORDING TO ZIA HE PROPOSED NO FIRM STEPS TO REVERSE THIS TREND. FIRYUBIN WAS NOT PARTICULARLY FORTHCOMING ON ECONOMIC AID ("TOO LITTLE AND TOO SLOW") OR ON SPARES FOR SOVIET MILITARY EQUIPMENT IN BANGLADESH. BANGLADESH ASKED FOR SOVIET HELP IN RURAL ELECTRIFICATION, BUT GOT NO RESPONSE. (COMMENT: THEY ALSO RAISED THIS WITH THE CHINESE. WE WILL NEED TO RELATE THESE OVERTURES TO OUR OWN PROPOSED EFFORTS IN THIS FIELD.) THE SOVIETS WANTED TO GET INTO THE FIELD OF NATURAL GAS EXPLOITATION BUT BANGLADESH IS HOLDING THEM OFF. THEY ARE NOT TURNING IN A GOOD RECORD IN OIL EXPLORATION BECAUSE OF ANTIQUATED METHODS AND OBSOLETE EQUIPMENT. AND BANGLADESH MUCH PREFERS HELP FROM THE WEST IN DEVELOPING ITS NATURAL GAS RESOURCES.

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8. AT THE END OF THIS DISCUSSION, ZIA SAID HIS TRIP TO CHINA AND HIS TALKS WITH THE SOVIET DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER HAD MADE HIM EVEN MORE AWARE OF ONE ESSENTIAL POINT: THAT THE UNITED STATES MUST MAINTAIN MILITARY SUPERIORITY OVER THE SOVIET UNION. HE VERY MUCH HOPED WE WOULD. I REPLIED THAT HE NEED HAVE NO CONCERN. FROM STATEMENTS BY LEADERS OF THE NEW ADMINISTRATION, IT WAS APPARENT THAT WE WOULD CONTINUE TO SEEK WAYS TO RELAX INTERNATIONAL TENSION AND REDUCE ARMAMEMTS BUT THERE WAS ABSOLUTELY NO QUESTION BUT THAT WE WOULD DO WHATEVER WAS NECESSARY TO MAINTAIN A CREDIBLE DETERRENT TO THE SOVIETS. MASTERS

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